

REMARKS

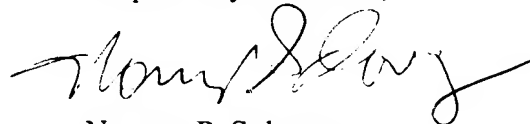
The specification and abstract have been amended to correct minor clerical errors, better conform to U.S. practice and employ more idiomatic English. No new matter has been entered.

Turning to the art rejection, it is noted all of the claims have been rejected as anticipated by or obvious from Yamashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,447,960). Yamashita et al. constitutes §102(e) art, and has a U.S. filing date of March 28, 2001. The subject Application claims priority from Japanese Application No. 2001-016085 filed January 24, 2001. A certified copy of the '085 underlying Japanese Application was filed with the initial filing. Accompanying this Amendment is a Verified English Translation of the underlying '085 Japanese Priority Application, thus perfecting Applicant's priority claim, and removing Yamashita et al. as citable prior art in this case.

Having dealt with all the objections raised by the Examiner, the Application is believed to be in order for allowance. Early and favorable action are respectfully requested.

In the event there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge them (or credit any overpayment) to our Deposit Account Number 08-1391.

Respectfully submitted,



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Docket No. NEC NE254
Amendment A

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on July 31, 2003, at Tucson, Arizona.

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